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ABSTRACT

Students-Teach-Students is a program that trains teams of high school students to present a smoking education program and role-model to fifth graders, helping them to overcome peer pressure to smoke cigarettes and marijuana. Surveys show that a significant percentage of students first begin to experiment with smoking cigarettes and marijuana during the fifth grade. The most frequently cited reason to experiment with smoking is peer pressure. The Students-Teach-Students program trains high school students who can communicate easily with the younger students. The high school students through role-modeling give the younger students the answers they need when faced with peer pressure. Immediately prior to the high school students' presentation, fifth grade teachers are given a complete 5-day curriculum that outlines smoking prevention activities for the children each day. The high school students reinforce what has just been taught by the fifth grade teachers. In 1990 the American Lung Association affiliate in the Gulf Coast region of Florida, trained 764 high school students reaching 7,314 elementary school children. It was evident by pre- and post-test statistical comparisons that the program was a huge success. This program is geared toward secondary and elementary school counselors and teachers. (Author)

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ABSTRACTSTUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS

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STUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS is a program that trains teams of high school students to present a smoking education program and role-model to fifth graders, helping them to overcome peer pressure to smoke cigarettes and marijuana.

Surveys show that a significant percentage of students first begin to experiment with smoking cigarettes and marijuana during the fifth grade. The most frequently cited reason to experiment with smoking is peer pressure.

The STUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS program trains high school students who can communicate easily with the younger students. The high school students through role-modeling give the younger students the answers they need when faced with peer pressure.

Immediately prior to the high school students presentation, fifth grade teachers are given a complete 5-day curriculum that outlines smoking prevention activities for the children each day. The high school students reinforce what has just been taught by the 5th grade teachers.

In 1990 the American Lung Association affiliate in the Gulf Coast region of Florida, trained 764 high school students reaching 7314 elementary school children. It is evident by pre and post test statistical comparisons that the program is a huge success.

This program is geared toward secondary and elementary school counselors and teachers.

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PRESENTATION AT THE FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE NATIONAL PEER HELPERS ASSOCIATION

June 23-26, 1990

The STUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS program trains teams of high school students to present a smoking education program and role model to fifth graders, helping them to overcome peer pressure to smoke cigarettes and marijuana. Extensive research has proven that a significant percentage of students first begin to experiment with smoking cigarettes and marijuana during the fifth grade. The most frequently cited reason to experiment with smoking is peer pressure.

The STUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS program trains high school students to communicate easily with the younger students. The high school students trained are primarily members of "Peer Facilitators" or "Peer Counseling" classes. These are mature students who are learning how to become peer leaders in their school. All of the participating students are required to be non-smokers, and are hand-picked by their teacher in terms of interest, aptitude and ability to communicate effectively. All of the students involved must, as role models, be able to give younger students the answers they would need when faced with peer pressure.

The STUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS program also teaches how the respiratory system functions and how smoking affects the system. Students learn about the diseases that can result from smoking cigarettes and marijuana. A lung biopsy is shown that graphically reveals the effect of long-term smoking and plastic models of lungs are also utilized to demonstrate the amount of tar that

can be collected from a single cigarette. A slide presentation shows the difference between diseased and healthy lungs and illustrates the cost of smoking. A packet of educational material is also given to each fifth grade student to further reinforce the lessons.

It should be stressed that all of the above mentioned components relate to additional teaching materials provided to the fifth grade teachers by the American Lung Association. In fact, the high school students' presentation is only one day's worth of a five day teaching unit on smoking. The five day course outline is as follows:

- Day 1 - Function of the Respiratory System (films loaned free of charge to the teachers)
- Day 2 - Pressure Situations to Smoke and Strategies to Handle Them
- Day 3 - Effects of Marijuana and Crack on the Lungs
- Day 4 - Reinforcement of Learning Activities Concerning Smoking
- Day 5 - High School Student Presentation

Need for the Program (objective data)

- *Nicotine, in the words of the American Medical Association, is "our most deadly addictive drug". It is highly toxic: a single drop of pure nicotine on the tongue can kill a person. The addictive nature of nicotine has been established beyond question.
- *Smoking kills more people every year than all other drugs and alcohol combined.
- *Smoking kills eight times as many Americans each year as die in motor vehicle accidents.
- *Smoking kills more Americans each year than died in battle in World War II and Vietnam put together.
- *Fires started by cigarettes take some 1600 lives and cause about 4000 injuries each year in the United States.

Need for the Program (objective data) -cont.-

- *Smoking destroys lung tissue. It constricts blood vessels and replaces oxygen in blood cells with carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas.
- *Even though well over 40,000 scientific studies have demonstrated the physical harm done by smoking tobacco, surveys tell us that many Americans still don't realize that smoking is hazardous to their health.
- *Almost half of all smokers do not know that most cases of lung cancer are caused by smoking, or that the vast majority of victims struck by lung cancer die from the disease.
- *Millions of smokers - between 13 and 17% of the 54,000,000 Americans now smoking - still don't realize that smoking is hazardous to their health.
- *More than half of all Americans do not realize that cigarette smoking is addictive.
- *"Cigarette smoking is the chief, single, avoidable cause of death in our society and the most important public health issue of our time", according to the Surgeon General (1982).
- *PREVENTING ADOLESCENTS FROM STARTING TO SMOKE CIGARETTES appears to be the most effective means of reducing the devastating toll that smoking-related disease exacts on health.
- *Surveys show that a significant percentage of students first begin to experiment with smoking cigarettes and marijuana during the fifth grade. The most frequently cited reason to experiment with smoking is peer pressure.

Desired Outcomes

1. In general, the program aims to provide the opportunity for the high school participants to affect the lives of other people. This helps the young person learn the kind of behavior required of a socially responsible adult.
2. More specifically, the program desires to accomplish the following:
 - a. 100% of the trained high school peer group leaders will demonstrate on a pre/post test comparison that they have a basic understanding of the lung and the effects of smoking.

b. 100% of the peer group leaders will demonstrate a basic understanding of the dynamics of peer role models, the benefit of group participation in discussion and the preparation necessary to make a verbal presentation.

c. 80% of the 5th grade students who exhibited positive attitudes toward smoking on a pre-test will reflect negative attitudes on the post-test.

d. 80% of the 5th grade students will be able to name three reasons why a person should not smoke. 100% will be able to name one.

e. 80% of the teachers completing an evaluation report will rate the program as influential and interesting to the students and worthy of continuation.

3. An additional outcome is the provision of an opportunity for high school students to practice effective public speaking and leadership quality. An increase in self-confidence is a possible by-product of this.

Method of Evaluation

Pre- and post-tests for the trained high school students as well as the 5th grade students that receive the program.

Source of Finance

The entire program (including all program components and materials) is funded by the American Lung Association. A significant portion of the American Lung Association budget is put into educating the public - especially the young - to the grim toll tobacco takes on smokers and non-smokers. The mission of the American Lung Association is the prevention and control of all lung disease. Since an overwhelming percentage of lung disease and death wouldn't occur were it not for cigarette smoking, the Lung Association is committed to fund tobacco education projects for as long as the need continues. There are no expenses at all to the school system.

Uniqueness of the Program

The STUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS program does not replace any existing part of the curriculum. In fact, it is simply an adjunct to the teaching unit on tobacco. All of the classes targeted for this program have units on this topic. Another unique aspect of the program is the peer-counseling concept. Surveys show that a significant percentage of students first begin to experiment with smoking cigarettes and marijuana during the fifth grade. The most frequently cited reason to experiment with smoking is peer pressure. The STUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS program trains high school students who can communicate easily with the younger students. In many cases, the students go into their former grade schools where they are known. The high school students through role-modeling give the younger students the answers they need when faced with peer pressure.

The desired outcome of our program focuses on learning as a cooperative undertaking. It is a unique situation where the high school students gain important social/interpersonal skills as well as an increase in their knowledge of the health effects of smoking. The elementary students, in turn, witness effective role-modeling as well as increasing their awareness of smoking.

Length of Time Necessary to Complete Objectives

The program involves three training sessions of 45-50 minutes by the American Lung Association staff. The implementation

of the program involves an approximate one to two hour total time period.

What Area of the Curriculum Will This Replace in Instructional Time?

The STUDENTS-TEACH-STUDENTS program does not replace any instructional time. As mentioned earlier, it is simply an adjunct to the already existing unit on tobacco.

What are Some Benefits the School System Will Receive?

In the area of smoking behavior, the American Lung Association believes that increased awareness leads to more mature decision-making on the part of the student. Also, the problem of second-hand smoke in school facilities can be lessened and maintenance costs can go down. In a much broader sense, programs such as this can assist the Surgeon General in his goal of graduating a smoke-free class in the year 2000.

What Resources Will Be Required of the School System?

No resources other than the temporary use of a slide projector during the presentation by high school students.

What Facilities Will Be Required?

No special facilities are required. The training of the high school students takes place in their regular classroom. The presentations by these high school students is done in the elementary school's 5th grade classrooms.

Target Group

Target groups to deliver the program to elementary 5th grade students include secondary level classes in Health Occupations, Peer Counseling and Child Development. We feel that the Health Occupations students are a very select and motivated group of young people who are exploring health related occupations as a future profession. In addition, they have already acquired a significant amount of knowledge related to health behavior. Students from Peer Counseling and Child Development classes are also a very select group. The goals/objectives of this type of class closely parallels the desired outcome of our program. Teachers of these classes have told us it fits in perfectly as a project they can develop for their students.

Management

The management of the program is the full responsibility of the American Lung Association staff. Permission for the program implementation would always be obtained first from the local Board of Education and then from the high school and elementary school principals. The program implementation would involve a high degree of coordination with the Lung Association staff person and the teachers involved.